

BOOK REVIEWS

JIM KIMMEL. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JERRY TOUCHSTONE KIMMEL. FOREWORD BY ANDREW SANSON. 2011. **Exploring the Brazos River From Beginning to End.** (ISBN: 978-1-60344-432-3, pbk.). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Bldg., Lewis St., 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamu-press.com, 800-826-8911). \$24.95, 192 pp., 72 color photos, 7 maps, 8.5" × 10".

The Brazos River crosses Texas from the northwest to the Gulf of Mexico. Along the way the longest river in Texas travels through six of the ten major ecoregions regions of the state. The author does a marvelous job of guiding us along the entire route of the Brazos. In words and photographs he introduces us to the plants, animals, landforms, rivers, and geology of Texas.

Starting in the dry High Plains in New Mexico the river and the author follow a winding pathway across the High Plains, Rolling Plains, Cross Timbers, and Prairies. Both then move on to the Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah, and Gulf Prairie and Marshes regions. In each section, the author points out key features of the river and the landscape. He thoughtfully lists state parks, historical landmarks, and places to visit.

Texas is a large and diverse state and it is difficult to grasp this diversity easily. By using this single river the Kimmels provide the reader with a cross section of the state. Sections of the book deal with the science of rivers and water flow, plant and animal ecology, and key agricultural activities. I especially appreciated the sections titled "Where to Experience the Land and River." Within each region the author notes these points of interest and invites the reader to travel to these sites.

This book is a guide for travelers, an introduction to a variety of natural sciences, and a history of the state as it expanded from coastal settlements to the high plains. The book is a fun read and is a welcome companion for anyone exploring the various sections of the Brazos Basin.

—Richard Lankow, Ph.D., Volunteer,

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GIL NELSON. 2011. **Botanical Keys to Florida's Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines: A Guide to Field Identification.** (ISBN: 978-1-56164-499-5, pbk.). Pineapple Press, Inc., P.O. Box 3889, Sarasota, Florida 34230, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.pineapplepress.com). \$19.95, 208 pp., 2 b/w plates, 6" × 9".

Morphological characteristics used to identify species are defined in a 9-page glossary along with 2 pages of line drawings for leaves. There are no photographs included, which limits the use of this book as a standalone publication for the identification of trees, shrubs, and woody vines in Florida. Indeed, the flyer suggests that this book should be a companion to *The Trees of Florida* and *The Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*. The book is designed primarily for field use and the handheld size and light weight will facilitate carrying the book in the field. The dichotomous keys are constructed as numbered couplets, usually less than 14 leads and based mostly on leaf morphology. Most of the key characteristics are based on easily seen features with emphasis on traits observable throughout the year. There are two sets of keys: one a master key to major groups of woody plants and another to 128 families. The families are arranged alphabetically by scientific name, followed by the author's name but without regard to phylogeny or higher ranks of classification. Choice of family names is based on the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group classification.

Two paginated indices, one for genus and another for common names, facilitate location of names within the text. Native and non-native species are included and endangered, threatened, or invasive species are designated by symbols. Taxa listed include habitat descriptions and county distribution patterns. Persons with a special need to identify Florida plants will find this book useful.

—Harold W. Keller, Research Associate,

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